

C55.302: F52

A UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
PUBLICATION



The MARINE GAME FISH PROGRAM



U.S.
DEPARTMENT
OF
COMMERCE

National
Oceanic and
Atmospheric
Administration

National Marine
Fisheries Service

Each year the sport of fishing draws increasing numbers of Americans to our sea shores in search of fish whose taste, fighting ability, or appearance make them a desirable catch. And marine sport fishing, as a major source of recreation and revenue, has become the subject of studies aimed at comprehending the economic and recreational bonds which tie Americans to saltwater game fish, and how human activities affect the living resources of the sea.



Many of these studies are carried out by NOAA, the U.S. Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, its National Marine Fisheries Service, and institutions receiving support through NOAA's Office of Sea Grant. At the heart of this effort is the Marine Game Fish Program, a far-reaching effort developed by the National Marine Fisheries Service to learn what needs to be known to manage and conserve the game fish of the sea.





The Marine Game Fish Program

In 1970, some 9½ million anglers (up from about 6 million in 1960) chose to cast their lines along the Nation's coast and spent enough doing this . . . about \$1.2 billion, or \$129 per fisherman . . . to make marine sport fishing an important economic force. More than half fished Atlantic waters, with the remainder about evenly split between the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico.

What do they fish for? Off New England it could be a blue fish or a prickly puffer, while down the coast it might be a striped bass or a flounder. In the warm waters off Florida or in the Gulf of Mexico a fisherman might see his dreams come true as he brings a silvery tarpon to gaff or boats a speckled sea trout. Pacific anglers off Southern California try their luck for albacore or yellowtail while farther north chinook salmon and rockfish offer a challenge. Alaskan anglers find their sport catching several species of salmon and giant halibut.



Waist deep in a pounding surf, crowding the rails of a party boat, casting a baited line from a fishing pier, or cruising the open seas in search of giant fighting fish, Americans in ever increasing numbers find recreation and adventure fishing in saltwater.

In the sport fishing world, one man's recreation is another's livelihood. Party boat captains, guides, marina owners, bait and tackle dealers, resort operators, and equipment manufacturers all share the wealth when Americans go down to the sea to fish.

And all would share the loss if the sport fish resource seriously declined. Some valuable species are threatened by pollution and habitat destruction. Others have been unwisely exploited. Will there always be enough fish to go around, and enough places to go fishing? Can the marine environment continue to produce fish in sufficient numbers and of the size favored by most anglers? These are some of the hard questions the Marine Game Fish Program was designed to answer.

There is a long tradition of cooperative effort between the coastal states and the Federal Government to develop ways to ensure wise use



of fishery resources by both sport and commercial interests. The Marine Game Fish Program extends this tradition.

In cooperation with the coastal States, the National Marine Fisheries Service conducts research programs which seek to learn more about marine game fish and the factors that affect their abundance, growth, and behavior. Research is also directed toward anadromous species—salmon, shad, and striped bass, which live and grow in saltwater, but return to fresh water to spawn. To obtain information on fish migrations and abundance, the Fisheries Service cooperates with sport fishing organizations and independent laboratories in extensive fishtagging programs.

Other studies examine the productivity of artificial reefs and the effects of other man-made changes on the environment.

Because the dimensions of the sport must be identified, statistical studies are carried out in coastal areas to determine the numbers of anglers, extent of catch by species, and the economic factors involved.

The Marine Game Fish Program seeks to enhance as well as identify existing sport fish



resources by providing technical information and advice on locating and building reefs, and other sport fishing facilities. The program also helps locate and develop new or under utilized sport fisheries, develops new equipment and techniques, organizes workshop sessions and forums for the exchange of information, and publishes material designed to help fishermen enjoy their sport, properly care for their catch once ashore, and cook the fish with style.

The quality of tomorrow's marine sport fishing depends on what we do now. Today. You can help.

- **Keep only the fish you can readily use.**
- **Keep informed on what is happening in the ocean environment, and how it affects your fishing.**
- **Speak out against pollution and environmental degradation.**
- **Join sport fishing organizations and fight for wise use of our marine resources.**
- **Keep it clean: Don't litter afloat or ashore.**
- **Respect the rights of landowners and other fishermen.**



A000070941005

NOAA, the Marine Environment, and Oceanic Life

NOAA is a reflection of the pervasive link between man, the marine environment, and oceanic life. Created in 1970 by combining existing environmental science, oceanographic, and marine fisheries organizations, NOAA is the national focus for non-military efforts in the oceanic, atmospheric, and marine biological sciences, and their associated technologies.

NOAA's National Ocean Survey charts our coastal and Great Lakes waters, monitors and predicts tides and tidal currents, tests new oceanographic sensors, and is developing a system of automated ocean data buoys. The Environmental Research Laboratories conduct programs aimed at improving our understanding of the physical processes and mineral resources of the marine environment. The National Marine Fisheries Service conducts broad research and service programs aimed at improving our comprehension and uses of the ocean's living resources. The National Weather Service provides a wide variety of marine and oceanographic reports and forecasts, and transmits timely warnings of natural hazards. The Environmental Data Service manages and processes the world's largest collection of marine environmental data. The National Environmental Satellite Service is developing ways to monitor events in the global ocean from the vantage point of space.



NOAA/PA 72037 1973